

ADOPTION REIMBURSEMENT



JOINT BASE ANDREWS LAW CENTER

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Active duty military members may apply for and possibly receive thousands of dollars in reimbursement for the expense of adoption. Recent questions, however, indicate that the program, referred to as the DoD Adoption Reimbursement Program, is not well known. The program, which was created in 1988, suspended in 1990, then reinstated permanently by the 1993 Defense Authorization Act, is primarily the responsibility of the Defense Finance Account Service (DFAS).

In order to receive adoption reimbursement, at the time of application, the military member must have served at least 180 consecutive days on active duty, the adoption must be final, the application must be filed no later than 1 year after the adoption, and the adoption must have occurred after 5 December 1991. Additionally, the adoption must have been arranged through a state or local government agency or through a non-profit, voluntary adoption agency. Private adoptions are not covered. Adoption of stepchildren is covered only if adoption is through a non-profit, voluntary adoption agency.

Military members may be reimbursed a maximum of \$2,000.00 per child for qualifying expenses related to the adoption, and a maximum of \$5,000.00 for multiple adoptions per calendar year. Categories of adoption, qualifying for reimbursement are:

- Adoptions by a married couple;
- Adoptions by a single person;
- Adoption of children under 18 years of age; and
- Adoption of children with special needs.

Adoption expenses are reimbursable, as long as they are “reasonable and necessary.” These include placement fees, legal fees and court costs, certain medical expenses, and temporary foster care fees (when required by the adoption process). Military members should maintain copies of all receipts they may have pertaining to the adoption to submit with the application. Travel costs are not reimbursable.

For domestic adoptions, you must submit a DD Form 2675, a copy of the final court adoption decree, and a copy of receipts for reimbursable adoption expenses. Additional documentation will be required for foreign adoptions, such as documents showing the adopted child’s citizenship status, a copy of all final court documents, and a copy of documentation showing that the adoption was arranged by a qualified adoption agency.

Air Force members who want to apply for adoption reimbursement should contact their local military personnel flight, customer service section, for guidance and copies of the application forms. Once an application is submitted, a determination will take 4-6 weeks. For claims that are approved, payment will be issued via direct deposit.

Resources:

- DoD 1341.09
- Volume 7A, Appendix A for the DoD Financial Management Regulation
- <http://www.dfas.mil/militarymembers/payentitlements/adoptionreimbursement.html>
- *Same sex couples must be legally married in a State that recognizes same sex marriage, if seeking adoption reimbursement as a married couple